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WASHINGTON IRVING

COMMEMORATION OF THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

BY THE

WASHINGTON IRVING ASSOCIATION

AT

TARRYTOWN-ON-HUDSON

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 3, 1883

ADDRESSES BY

JUDGE NOAH DAVIS, CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER, DONALD G. MITCHELL,
WILLIAM C. WILKINSON, JAMES WOOD, ETC.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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1884

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The following account of the commemoration of the Centennial Anniversary of the birth of Washington Irving has been prepared pursuant to a resolution of the Washington Irving Association of Tarrytown, adopted at a meeting held on Saturday, the 7th of April, following the celebration.

M. H. B.
J. T. L.

TARRYTOWN-ON-HUDSON
May, 1884

M599388

COMMITTEES.

COMMITTEE ON ARRANGEMENTS:

MARSHAL H. BRIGHT, JOHN ROCKWELL,
LUCIUS T. YALE, DAVID A. ROWE,
GEN. J. F. HALL.

COMMITTEE ON SPEAKERS:

JAMES T. LAW, STEPHEN H. THAYER,
MARSHAL H. BRIGHT, L. T. YALE.

COMMITTEE ON ENTERTAINMENT AND TRANSPORTATION:

JOHN ROCKWELL, T. J. TEMPLE,
JAMES RICHARDSON.

COMMITTEE ON BADGES:

D. A. ROWE, M. D. RAYMOND.

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Your affectionate friend
Washington Irving.

INTRODUCTORY.

In this hurrying age anniversaries, whether of the birth of great men or of great events, are easily lost sight of. Indeed, the number of memorable anniversaries is small at best. Back in the history of the world stretches an endless procession of men who were great in some one at least of all the possible elements of greatness, whose very names even form a subject for dispute, while the years of their birth are unknown, or if known seldom or never recalled. So there are records of great deeds which have changed the maps of the world, yet which are almost lost in the morning mist or dimly seen in faint perspective, while nearly all are imbedded in the intensity and dominance of the present. Interest in men and events of the past, it scarcely need be said, is not so much proportioned to their importance at the particular time of their existence, as to the relation which they sustain to the living issues and nearer generation of to-day. And so it might be expected that while the two hundredth anniversary of the death of quaint Sir Thomas Browne might pass unnoticed, at least the one hundredth birthday of our own Washington Irving, of whom it may historically be more truly said than Halleck said of Cooper, that

> His name is with his country's woven ;
> *First* in her fields, her pioneer of mind ;—

it might naturally be expected that the birthday of Washington Irving would not be forgotten either by those his fellow-laborers in the field of literature or by his sometime fellow-countrymen—some his immediate personal friends, inhabitants of Tarrytown, where he lived, where he worshipped, and upon whose every hill, valley, and bosky hollow he had cast like a spell the witchery of his romance. Yet so it was, that the approaching anniversary seems to have wholly escaped attention until a newspaper slip announcing the near centenary of Irving's birth arrested the attention of three gentlemen living in Tarrytown. These gentlemen meeting one day—it was about the middle of March—the question naturally arose, "Why not do something to commemorate the event?" Sure enough, why not? The question was answered in part by an agreement to invite a few friends to meet as soon as practicable for consultation over the matter. Later, Mr. T. J. Temple invited the gentlemen interested to meet at his house—an invitation which was promptly accepted, and subsequently made to include not only that but all subsequent meetings.

On Monday, the 19th of March, the first meeting was held. There were present on that occasion the following gentlemen, viz.: M. H. Bright, Gen. James F. Hall, James T. Law, David A. Rowe, Rev. J. Selden Spencer, T. J. Temple, and L. T. Yale. The gentlemen then and there assembled organized themselves into an Association to be known as "The Washington Irving Association," whose object was declared to be that of "appropriately

commemorating the life and services to literature of Washington Irving by appropriately celebrating the centennial anniversary of his birth in the town where he lived and died." Additions were made by election, constituting the General Committee of the Association as follows :

The General Committee.

Marshal H. Bright.	John Rockwell.
Washington Choate.	James Richardson.
Harry A. Grant, Jr.	David A. Rowe.
James F. Hall.	J. Selden Spencer.
N. C. Husted.	Thos. J. Temple.
D. W. Judd.	Stephen H. Thayer.
James T. Law.	William C. Wilkinson.
M. D. Raymond.	Lucius T. Yale.

The following officers were then elected :

Rev. J. Selden Spencer, *President.*
T. J. Temple, *1st Vice-President.*
D. W. Judd, *2d Vice-President.*
L. T. Yale, *Secretary.*
D. A. Rowe, *Treasurer.*

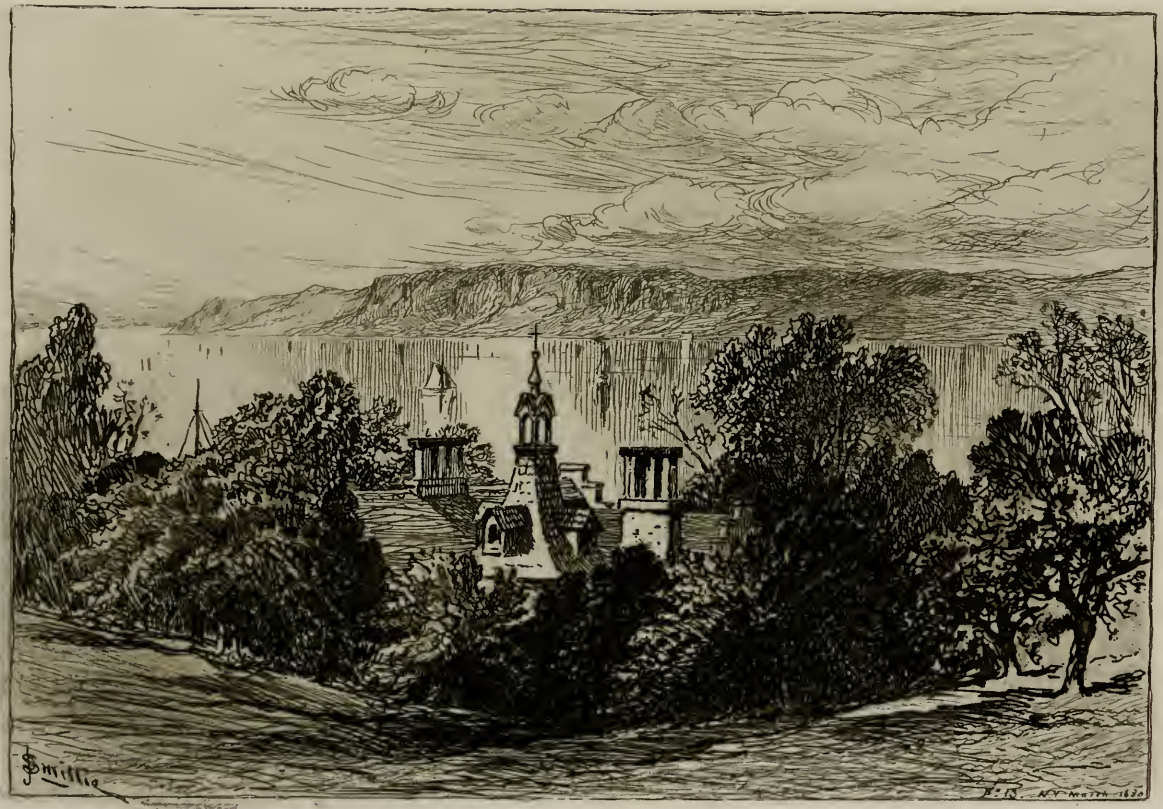
It was then formally resolved, " that this Association celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Washington Irving, in Tarrytown, on Tuesday evening April 3, 1883." A committee on speakers was then appointed, viz.: Messrs. Jas. T. Law, S. H. Thayer, M. H. Bright, L. T. Yale.

The next meeting of the General Committee was held at Mr. Temple's residence, on Thursday evening, March 22d. All the Committee were present. The offer of the Trustees of the Second Reformed Church, tendering the use of that building, was received and accepted

with thanks. It was ascertained that more extended facilities could not be had;—whatever celebration was had must take place in a church, and arrangements must be perfected during the ensuing ten days. The necessary additional committees were then appointed [see p. v.].

It was resolved, that membership in the Association be placed at one dollar, and that all citizens of Westchester County in sympathy with the objects of the Association be invited to join. It was further resolved, "that Mr. Donald G. Mitchell be invited to deliver an address appropriate to the occasion." A resolution was also adopted, inviting the Westchester County Historical Society to be present on the occasion; and a like invitation was extended to the old friends and acquaintances of Mr. Irving, in Tarrytown. The presence of the Misses Irving was also especially invited. Mr. S. H. Thayer was invited to write a poem for the occasion, which, though on brief notice, he consented to do.

The Committee met again on Friday, March 30th. It was voted to request of the Misses Irving, the favor of having Sunnyside open to the public on the 3d day of April. [The request was promptly acceded to later by the ladies, and Sunnyside was open for several days, very many from all parts of the country availing themselves of the opportunity to visit "Woolfort's Roost," which remained the same as it was on the day of Mr. Irving's death.] The various Committees then made their reports, and the list of speakers being submitted, the following programme was adopted:



THE WASHINGTON IRVING CENTENARY,

AT TARRYTOWN-ON-HUDSON.

TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 3, 1883,

AT THE

SECOND REFORMED CHURCH.

THE HON. NOAH DAVIS WILL PRESIDE.

PROGRAMME.

1. PRELUDE . ("Rip Van Winkle") . Miss HAWES.
2. SALUTATORY ADDRESS . . . . JAMES WOOD.
3. READING OF LETTERS, ETC . Rev. WASHINGTON CHOATE.
4. PERSONAL REMINISCENCES . Rev. J. SELDEN SPENCER.
5. ADDRESS . . . . . DONALD G. MITCHELL.
6. ADDRESS . . . . . CHAS. DUDLEY WARNER.
7. SONG . "The Lost Chord" . . Miss SEARS.
8. ADDRESS . . . . . W. C. WILKINSON, D.D.
9. BENEDICTION . . . Prof. T. S. DOOLITTLE, D.D.

COMMENCING AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Under the Auspices of the Washington Irving Association :

Rev. J. SELDEN SPENCER, President,	Gen. JAS. F. HALL,	
T. J. TEMPLE, 1st Vice-President,	N. C. HUSTED,	
D. W. JUDD, 2d Vice-President,	JAMES T. LAW,	
L. T. YALE, Secretary,	JOHN ROCKWELL,	*General*
D. A. ROWE, Treasurer,	JAMES RICHARDSON,	*Committee.*
MARSHAL H. BRIGHT,	M. D. RAYMOND,	
WASHINGTON CHOATE,	STEPHEN H. THAYER,	
H. A. GRANT, Jr.,	W. C. WILKINSON.	

THE CELEBRATION.

The services were held as appointed in the Second Reformed Church, Rev. J. A. Todd, D.D., pastor, and the programme was carried out in its entirety. From New York, Brooklyn, and other adjacent points, many came to swell the audience assembled to do honor to the memory of Washington Irving in the beautiful little town which had so long been his home, and where he died. The church presented a beautiful appearance, and especially so the platform and its surroundings. The pulpit was removed, and banks of exquisite flowers, ferns, and palms formed a setting of rare beauty, in the centre of which was the original portrait of Irving, executed by Jarvis when the author was but twenty-four years of age. The legend 1783–1883 in large gilt figures stood against the bank of greenery. The building was literally packed—every square inch being occupied. Among those present were Judges Larremore, Van Vorst, and Arnoux; President Merrill Edward Gates, of Rutgers College; the Misses Irving; Rev. Drs. David Cole and James M. Ludlow; Generals Francis Darr and Alexander Shaler; Geo. Haven Putnam, Esq.; Messrs. J. N. Hallock, Hamilton W. Mabie, and Eliot McCormick, of the New York religious press; Professors E. T. Lounsbury; T. S. Doolittle, D.D., and Norman Fox; Wm. S. Wilson,

Washington Irving

Sunnyside Dec^r. 15^th 1851.

Jonathan Odell, and Jacob Odell, Esqs.: and other old friends of Mr. Irving.

Precisely as the clock was striking eight the speakers, headed by the President of the evening, Chief-Justice Noah Davis, entered, taking their seats on the platform, followed by the General Committee. Miss Hawes at once commenced playing the appropriate selection of the overture from "Rip Van Winkle" on the organ, and the exercises were fairly under way. Upon the conclusion of the overture Chief-Justice Davis rose and addressed the stilled audience as follows:

CHIEF-JUSTICE NOAH DAVIS'S ADDRESS.

Ladies and Gentlemen:—We are met to commemorate the one hundredth birthday of Washington Irving. Nowhere in all America—and that is saying in all the world—could that event be more fitly celebrated than here, on this right bank of the majestic river, which he loved to call the "lordly Hudson," and in this most beautiful region of the Hudson's incomparable beauties. Here, on these hills and in these valleys, Irving loved, in youth, to wander and repose. Here in manhood he chose and built the home where he lived for many years, and in which he did much of his life's best work; and here he died, and in his self-chosen spot in yonder beautiful cemetery rests all of him that was mortal.

To him this region was classic ground in the legendary tales and dreamy lore of its early settlers; and in many memories of the war of the Revolution which had just

ended as his life began,—and notably in that singular event which you recall in bronze and marble, when the liberties of America hung trembling on the virtues of three young yeomen of Westchester. Classic, also, it was in the broad sweep of the "Tappan Zee," in the grand outlook from these monumental hills, in the sweet composure of these smiling valleys, and in the music of their leaping rivulets. Here Nature and Irving became lovers in his only wedded faith, and she made him her interpreter to cast over river and hill, valley and stream the glamour of his genius. [Applause.]

To this Association comes the grateful duty, to make this stretch of riverside comprising what is now known as Tarrytown and Irvington, something akin to what Stratford-upon-Avon is to the memory of Shakespeare,—a Mecca, in which the lovers and devotees of letters bring tribute to the shrine of genius. To the American who visits Stratford-upon-Avon, next in interest after the house and room in which Shakespeare was born, and the church in which he was buried, and the few scenes known to be interwoven with his life, is the little parlor of the "Red Horse Inn" called Washington Irving's room,—full of mementos of him,—in which he lived for many weeks and where he wrote the sketch which made Americans more familiar with Shakespeare's birthplace than Englishmen themselves, and Englishmen more familiar than ever before. [Applause.]

So I trust this Association will to-night give to the domain of literature, similar portrayals of the life-place, death-place, and burial-place of Washington Irving, to

whom belongs the honor of America's first-born conqueror of an undisputed seat in the world's great Republic of Letters.

When the hearty and prolonged applause following the address had subsided, Judge Davis presented Mr. James Wood, President of the Westchester County Historical Society. Mr. Wood spoke as follows:

MR. JAMES WOOD'S SALUTATORY ADDRESS.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:—We all recognize that the fame of Irving belongs to mankind. Even America cannot claim it as exclusively her own, much less the city of New York where he was born, and this county of Westchester where he was pleased to make his home and where he died; and yet Westchester has a claim peculiarly her own, for, while we are joint-heirs with others in the heritage of his fame, Irving was here honored during his life for other qualities besides those of the gifted author, as he was here also known as the good citizen, the genial neighbor, and the Christian gentleman. Hence, it has seemed most fitting that the celebration of the centenary of his birth should take place here, close by his loved Sunnyside, under the care of those who are organized to preserve associations with his memory.

It was a happy coincidence that the year in which Great Britain acknowledged America's political independence witnessed the birth of him who was the first to cause the mother-country to acknowledge her literary independence also. The years that followed seemed illy

fitted for the cultured training of youth. The trying times of the Revolution had almost destroyed the facilities for education that had made such good progress in the colonial period, and the nine colleges founded before the war then barely maintained their existence, and some of them not continuously. The wealthiest and some of the most refined families of colonial times had been reduced to poverty or were expatriated because of their political sentiments. All the means for culture were far below the colonial facilities. But America has shown as little regard for established rules in intellectual progress as in her material development. Irving, closing an ordinary school education at the age of sixteen, soon surprised and delighted the literary world with his style of classic elegance, and, in a condition of society that favored the production of strength in character rather than refinement, he displayed the best of those gentle qualities claimed as only possible with a people long accustomed to the refining influences of an aristocracy. Buffon had advanced the theory, and the Abbé Raynal had sought to confirm it, that it was impossible for America to produce other than inferior races of men; and Lord Jeffrey, in noticing the "Sketch-Book" in the *Edinburgh Review*, thought it "a remarkable thing" that its "great purity and beauty of diction on the model of the most elegant and polished writers," should have been the work of an American. In old Amsterdam the diamond-cutters have long manipulated precious stones, making their surfaces that were rough and unattractive shine with dazzling brilliancy. In New Amsterdam a

gem, uncut by others' art, shone in its inherent quality with a mellow lustre that has charmed the world. This lustre is unfading. So long as the heart of mankind responds when its chords are touched by the favored few who find access to its sacred presence, so long will men, from childhood to old age, smile and weep at Irving's gentle touches of humor and of pathos.

We may justly be proud that our country furnished a Motley for The Netherlands, and a Prescott for Spain, and that Irving gave to the world that "Life of Columbus" which has been pronounced by high English authority "a model of tasteful elegance, felicitous in every detail, and adequate in every respect"; and that his hands decked the walls of the Alhambra with unfading garlands. We can congratulate ourselves that the task of recording the life of Washington fell to his appreciative pen; and it is a part of our local good fortune that his touch has made classic ground of familiar localities about us, as his closely attached friend, Sir Walter Scott, hallowed so many places by his genius.

We desire at all times to treasure this name, honored and loved around the wide world; and, on this centennial anniversary of his birth, we bid you, gentlemen, who have come to take part in this celebration, and all who are here present, welcome to the home of Irving. Though we cannot hope to grasp the inspiration of the genius of the author, we may at least endeavor to emulate the character of the man. [Applause.]

At the conclusion of Mr. Wood's address the Rev. Washington Choate, of Irvington, read the following:

RESPONSES BY LETTER.

From Governor CLEVELAND.

Executive Chamber, Albany,
March 21, 1883.

Marshal H. Bright, Esq., Chairman, etc.:

Dear Sir—I have to-day received your invitation to attend the celebration of the anniversary of the birth of Washington Irving. I am sorry to be obliged to deny myself that pleasure on account of official duties. If a pure life and the placid calm of its later time are of benefit to the world, and if he who writes to instruct and elevate, while he diverts, is entitled to grateful remembrance, we do well to celebrate the birth of our beloved countryman.

I hope the observance of this anniversary will long continue to remind all who read of one who, though dead, should always live in their love and admiration.

Yours very truly,
Grover Cleveland.

From JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Amesbury, *Third Month*, 21, 1883.

James T. Law, Esq., Tarrytown, N. Y.:

Dear Friend—I have received thy invitation in behalf of the committee in charge of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birthday of Washington Irving. I greatly regret that age and delicate health must prevent me from availing myself of it.

So general are the admiration and love of all English-speaking people for the genial author of the "Sketch-Book," that it may be regarded superfluous for me to own my great indebted-

ness to him as a writer of exceeding purity and beauty of style and thought, the pioneer of American literature.

It has been long a matter of regret that while he was living I did not feel myself warranted in seeking the acquaintance of one upon whom I could have no other claim than that of a sincere admirer. Our literature has assumed large proportions since he laid aside his pen, but his writings have lost none of their attractions; and the veil of romance which he has thrown over the Highlands of the Hudson still lingers there, and Crow Nest and Dunderberg will always loom through it.

I thank the committee for remembering me on the occasion of his anniversary, and am very truly thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

FROM GEORGE WM. CURTIS.

WEST NEW BRIGHTON, STATEN ISLAND,
March 31, 1883.

DEAR SIR—I am very sorry that I am unable to accept the invitation to take part in the centenary commemoration of Irving, on Tuesday evening, at Tarrytown. Nowhere could the anniversary of his birth be more fitly celebrated than in the town which he chose for his home, and in which he died and lies buried, on the banks of the noble river over which his genius has thrown a romantic and enduring charm.

If it were possible for me to come, I should venture to suggest that no place and no time could be more appropriate than those of your meeting, for beginning an active movement to secure a statue of Washington Irving in Central Park. The Park is happily becoming a Sylvan Walhalla or Pantheon; a gallery of memorials of famous men, and especially of great authors of every land, as befits a cosmopolitan city. But what American could show a more commanding title to such an honor than Irving? Whose statue would stand with more pro-

priety among the noble figures that recall the glories of the literature of Britain, Germany, and Italy, than that of the man who wrote the first American book that the whole world read, and still reads with delight, and from which dates our distinctive literature ?

Such a memorial might well be erected in any part of the country, for Irving belongs to that group of authors who are not only admired for the charm of their works, but who are themselves beloved for the purity and sweetness of their lives. Yet while the whole country justly claims him, he was in a certain distinctive sense a New Yorker. He made the city and its neighborhood, and the Hudson River, peculiarly his own. His genius is especially connected with the region which the Park commands, and the name of Knickerbocker, which he has associated with New Amsterdam forever, is intimately and familiarly blended with the life and activities of New York. In New York, therefore, and in Central Park, his statue should be erected, not for his own fame, which will endure as long as the thunder rolls among the Catskill Mountains, and the midnight gusts sweep through Sleepy Hollow, but to remove from his native city the reproach of neglecting to include among those whom she honors in her great resort, her most illustrious son, the benign patriarch of American literature.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

D. A. Rowe, Esq.

FROM JOHN JAY.

The Rev. F. Selden Spencer, President of the Irving Association :

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR—I would gladly have accepted the request of your Association, kindly brought to me by Mr. Rowe, to assist in celebrating the centennial of Irving's birth, had it not come at a moment of sudden domestic sorrow.

It is fitting that our old Westchester to which Irving by his

stories and his life has added the legendary charm which blends so happily with its historic memories, should pay to the author and to the man this loving tribute of remembrance ; and it is proper that this tribute should be paid on the banks of the Hudson, of which he wrote : "The Hudson is in a manner my first and last love, and, after all my wanderings and seeming infidelities, I return to it with a heartfelt preference over all the rivers of the world."

Some twenty-four years have passed since Irving was taken from us, and of the distinguished procession which saw him laid to rest, the most have followed him to the Spirit Land. Among those who on the third of April are to celebrate his birth there will be none of the friends of his youth, and but few who knew him in the serene evening of his days and amid the genial atmosphere of his pleasant home ; few who can recall the cordial greeting, the grace of manner, the cheery tone, the playful humor, the uniform kindliness of his nature, and the winning sunlight of his smile.

But all readers of Irving may learn his manly and tender traits from the unconscious personality which marks his writings, from the earlier creations of his sportive fancy, to his last and greatest work, the "Life of Washington."

It is pleasant to remember that if some of the names which shone in the literary firmanent, when Irving's star was rising modestly on the Western horizon, have paled amid the brightening light of later luminaries, the fame of Washington Irving, with a true, fixed, and resting quality, has attained the magnitude and brilliancy of a stately planet.

It is pleasant to think that when the people of Westchester and New York, with kinsmen, friends, and neighbors, shall meet at Tarrytown, near Sunnyside and Sleepy Hollow, to pay this centennial tribute to his virtues and his fame, their service of love will represent in a measure a world-wide circle, and express the cultured sympathies of other lands.

I am, dear sir, faithfully yours,

JOHN JAY.

NEW YORK, *March* 31, 1883.

FROM PRESIDENT NOAH PORTER.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., *March* 24, 1883.

Mr. Marshal H. Bright, Chairman, etc.:

MY DEAR SIR—I regret that it will not be possible for me to accept the courteous invitation of your Committee to be present at the Centennial Anniversary of the birth of Washington Irving on the 3d of April.

I should be pleased to bring with me a well-worn and much-read copy of the first ten numbers of *Salmagundi*, bound in a volume, which somehow happens to find itself among the odds and ends of my library. The numbers run from the second to the seventh edition, and the volume would suggest very many topics, upon all of which you will doubtless hear instructive and eloquent speakers.

We cannot estimate too highly the many and varied services which Washington Irving rendered to his generation in his long and useful life of varied and efficient activity.

Very respectfully,

N. PORTER.

Brief expressions of regret at inability to be present were also received from Rev. Jno. A. Todd and Rev. Jno. K. Allen of Tarrytown [these gentlemen were prevented by previous engagements, calling them out of town]; Rev. Jno. B. Thompson, D.D., formerly of Tarrytown; Rev. Drs. Jno. M. Buckley, Howard Crosby, John Hall, Wm. Ormiston, Samuel I. Prime and E. D. G. Prime of *The Observer;* H. C. Potter, Wm. M. Taylor, Wm. H. Ward of *The Independent;* Jno. H. Dey, Esq., of *The Evangelist;* Parke Godwin, President Barnard of Columbia College, President Eliot of Harvard, Thos. Bailey Aldrich, Jno. Treat Irving—Mr. Irving being pre-

vented by illness from attending; E. C. Stedman, and others. At the conclusion of the reading of the letters, the Rev. Washington Choate read the following poem, by Mr. Stephen H. Thayer, of Tarrytown, which was received with many manifestations of approval:

MR. THAYER'S POEM.

WASHINGTON IRVING. 1783–1883.

Distant we stand, as if from some far main
We viewed a wide expanse of wave and strand
Till, midway in the Eastern glimpse of land
Our vision greets a mountain on the plain.

Time, distance, cannot veil our wistful eyes;
The lofty peak stands ever as before,
And we, while gazing from the level shore,
See now its form in stainless lustre rise.

Clear sky and golden beauty bathe the height,
Serene it lifts its airy crest to fame;
Above the need or care of praise or blame,—
A fadeless summit clothed in robes of light:

So stands our Irving of a hundred years,
Loved master in the field of lettered lore,
Whose brow first bore the crown and nobly wore
Its circling nimbus far above his peers.

He missed the unsheathed sword, the battle-plain
That won for liberty her fair increase,
But kept his birthday in the year of peace,
The nation's jubilee from strife and pain.

He taught our embryo empire in its youth
That Art was loyal to its natal cause,
And wrote of gentler manners, kindlier laws,
Of beauty bred in common ways of truth.

From the wild haunts of brooding solitude,
From old traditions steeped in romance dear
He brought his marvels to the duller ear,
And to the heart a finer fancy wooed.

He had the poet's music and his dream,
His wanton imagery without his song,
Yet deftly wrought, in rhythms pure and strong,
Idyllic-like the method of his theme.

To him was given the charmed magician's hand,
To weave withal a mystic tale of love,
Or some sweet spell, the spirit-life to move,
And win it captive by his potent wand.

An affluent soul was his that made man kin,
A genial humor graced with beauteous speech,
Evoking tears and laughter, blessed to teach
A purer accent to the voice within.

What fair creation has his genius wrought !
What witcheries—in peopling yon lone vale—
He wove into the texture of a tale
And fashioned in the fancy of his thought !

The tides that bore him once to Eastern lands,
Come back to-day, resounding as they came
Long years ago, with echoes of his name,
And sweep their messages across our sands,

MATILDA HOFFMAN.

Till we, within the shadow of his home,
Bless the full radiance of his renown,
That breaks benign beyond the sea and town,
Unvexed by other lights that go and come:

And through the centuries we see afar
His glory—nothing dimmed from age to age—
In panegyrics light the living page,
To pledge for him the orbit of a star!

The President of the evening then introduced the Rev. James Selden Spencer, Rector of Christ Church, Tarrytown, of which Irving was for many years a communicant and warden. Mr. Spencer's topic was "Personal Reminiscences of Irving," whose pastor and intimate friend he was. Mr. Spencer spoke as follows:

REV. JAMES SELDEN SPENCER'S ADDRESS.

HAZLITT, in his admirable "Table-Talk," has an essay entitled, "Of Persons One would Wish to Have Seen." Lamb suggested the subject at a gathering of literary men, among whom were Dr. Burney, Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, and other celebrities. The ghosts of departed greatness were summoned before them, but with much adverse criticism. "What we want to see," says Lamb, "are *persons;* Mr. Locke and Sir Isaac Newton are not *persons*, that is, not characters. When you name them, you mean the 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' and the 'Principia.'" The discussion as to whom one would wish to have seen, seemed to turn, not simply upon the

preference to gaze upon men distinguished by their works, but upon the point of personality. Beyond the deeds of great men and the works of great authors, there may be nothing *personally* interesting in the men themselves. What we want most to see any one bodily for is, because of something peculiar in the individual, some spiritual magnetism of character, something more than we can learn from his writings, and yet which we are curious to know. The discussion closed by Lamb's saying: "There is only one other Person I can ever think of after this; if Shakespeare were to come into the room, we should all rise up to meet him; but if that Person were to come into it, we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of His garment." I think most of us in this assembly, gathered together to honor his memory on this centennial celebration of his birth, would name WASHINGTON IRVING as one we would wish to have seen. And those of us who have been privileged to see him in person will certainly count it among their most valued recollections that they have looked upon that distinguished man, around whose mind the sweetest visions of fancy played, like gleams of pleasant sunshine; he who stood in the foreground of American literature, and compelled its respect abroad; the playful humorist—the genial companion—the warm-hearted friend—one who has handed down to us the legends of the past so vividly that they have become the antiquarian lore of our land—one whose mind was a store-house of curious and quaint devices—a true, honest, upright, Christian gentleman. Seldom has literary fame been so beautifully blended

with personal attractiveness, nor did wit and learning form so close an alliance, as in Washington Irving. The name of Irving has taken a strong hold, not only upon the American heart, but wherever the Saxon in which he so purely wrote is spoken. Not only by the educated, but by common consent, his remarkable genius is recognized, and his fame secured. What largely evokes this universal eulogy is the presence of the *man* in his works. In him the affections and the intellect were beautifully blended;—the affections flowing in upon the intellect, tempering it with their hallowed grace and charity, and the intellect in return giving strength and dignity to the affections, illustrating what Coleridge so aptly terms "the heart in the head." It is of the *man* that I am to speak to-night. Washington Irving is certainly the one whom I most rejoice to have seen; and those here present who knew him will bear me out in the assertion that you saw but half of him in his works; the other half—and that the best half—was the attractive, winsome, personal character of the man. I shall ever count it among the most precious memories of my life that I have held intercourse with one so rarely gifted in heart and intellect as he, and have been privileged to minister unto him in holy things.

Disappointment has been expressed to me more than once by friends who have read the admirable "Life and Letters of Washington Irving," that so little is there said respecting his religious character. But that explanation is found, when we learn that the materials for that work were mainly prepared by Irving himself, and that the

most his biographer had to do was to weave them into shape. The latter himself says: "It has been my aim to make the author, in every stage of his career, as far as possible, his own biographer." Now, Irving was too sensitive and modest in his nature to allow attention to be drawn to his religious convictions. He instinctively shrank from any such publicity. It has been said that every man has two lives: that which is open and apparent to others, and that which is known only to himself and God. It was emphatically true of Irving; and that inner spiritual life of his was sacred to him in its privacy, into which no one must intrude. This was partly due to the great constitutional modesty of his nature, which was almost feminine in its delicacy, and partly to the solemn awe with which the religion of Christ impressed him. Religion directed and moulded his life, without any self-consciousness, but as an accepted law of his being. To be all which his Maker wished him to be, and gave him power to be, became a law of his existence, which he faithfully tried to fulfil. His religious convictions were deeply seated and sincere. If he was not, with polemic skill, unceasingly driving a religious sentiment into you with his lips, he yet was ever beautifully illustrating the religious life in his own. Every thing like display was foreign to his nature. His piety was not obtrusive, but illustrative. It flowed, not with the noisy murmurings of the shallow brook, but with the calm, peaceful, yet strong current of the river. He had the faith and humanity of a child, and in no one has rare modesty with greatness been more sweetly com-

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bined. Sallust's portrait of Cato is beautifully photographed in Irving: "He would rather *be*, than *seem* to be a good man, so that the less he sought glory, the more he obtained it." It was this which made his character so attractive, and his companionship so endearing to his friends; and no one could draw near the inner sanctuary of his heart, as some of us were privileged to do, without the most confident assurance that he was a true and devout Christian man.

My acquaintance with Irving began in the year 1854, under circumstances so tender and affecting, as to lead me ever after to regard him with the deepest affection. At the beginning of my ministry in Christ Church, Tarrytown, a heavy, foreboding sorrow overshadowed me; and when the blow came Washington Irving was one of the first to call upon me and proffer me the comfort and strength of his tender sympathy. The sorrow of another perhaps awakened the memory of his own anguish that followed the loss of his betrothed love. The warm and prolonged pressure of the hand made me feel the power of his sympathy, and then followed these few words, softly and gently spoken: "They who minister to others must not themselves refuse the consolation." This may appear a slight thing to others but to me it was a personal revelation of human sympathy, next to the peaceful benediction of the Master Himself. We often note how the world is surprised to learn that a man distinguished for remarkable abilities in science or literature is a Christian; and the surprise is often accompanied by chagrin,—for the world does not willingly

part with its votaries,—as if there were something quite out of harmony between intellectual gifts and the humility of Christian faith. But with Irving that early sorrow of his did not leave his heart stranded upon the arid sands of mere worldly renown. Its chastening influence, its hallowed memories, made that heart a sanctuary for more exalted hopes, for higher aspirations, than earth could ever satisfy; and while the world justly honors him with her admiration for his intellectual triumphs, the beautiful qualities of his heart may as justly challenge her profound esteem and love. I can never forget the embarrassment which I first experienced in preaching before Washington Irving. I painfully anticipated the criticism of one who stood in the foremost rank of our authors, whose chaste and elegant style has entitled him to be called the Addison of American Literature. But I soon found that there was no more devout or attentive listener in the church than he. He sat in his pew, with his head lightly resting upon his hand, in that pensive attitude which one of his portraits exhibits, I think, with great fidelity in the likeness. He would thus sit, with his eye intent upon the speaker, as one anxious to receive some truth for his soul's health. With all his powers of mind he knew of no other spiritual sustenance than the Gospel of Christ; and its plain, simple truths such as a little child might comprehend, were to him like the precious feeding upon the loaves broken in the Master's hands.

On my first interview with him at Sunnyside he introduced the subject of church music, of which he was

passionately fond. He then referred to the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Repeating the words, as if they were the joyful refrain of his own heart, "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good-will toward men," he exclaimed, his eyes filling with tears, and his voice trembling with emotion: "That is religion Mr. Spencer, that is true religion for you"— a simple truth enough, you say, but it assumes a vast importance when it becomes the devout utterance of the heart. In reference to the same divine hymn he said to Dr. Creighton: "I like it above all things; it contains the sum and substance of our faith, and I never hear it without having my mind lifted up and my heart made better by it." On another occasion, also at Sunnyside, he spoke to me, in words of thrilling tenderness, of a text which had profoundly impressed him. It was this: "My son, give me thine heart." Here was one of those instances where a single verse of Holy Scripture will stand out with a distinctness before unknown, and, as if with a divinely magnetic force, draw the heart nearer and closer to God. And this text he had thus treasured up as most precious to him. Years before he must have been deeply impressed with it, for on looking over a volume of Bishop Wainwright's sermons I find one on this text, accompanied by the statement in the preface, that it was suggested to the Bishop by Washington Irving, as a text which he should like of all things to hear treated of in a sermon. And those of us who knew him well have reason to believe that his character was formed and disciplined under a profound sense of personal responsibility to God. On another occasion, he expressed to me

with great feeling, the same general thought, in words which may be classed with the best and most beautiful he ever wrote: "Religion is of the heart—not of the head; we may, with the understanding approach the vestibule of the Temple, but it is only with the *heart* that we can enter its holy precincts and draw near its sacred altar."

It became a pleasant custom after morning service in Christ Church for the congregation to exchange cordial greetings with the venerable Dr. Creighton and Washington Irving at the vestibule. Some of us remember those delightful occasions. Young children, of whom Irving was specially fond, and who were fond of him, would surround him, putting a bunch of flowers in his hand, or a bud in his button-hole,—and they would always receive from him a kind word or a beaming smile. He diffused the pleasant sunshine of cheerfulness all around him, and no one ever entered the charmed circle of his presence without feeling the better for it. Sometimes he would say, with a warm grasp of the hand: "I thank you for your sermon," and then he would offer some striking observation upon the theme. He did not intend by this to be complimentary. His true heart had no words to waste in flattery, but he loved the plainest truths of the Gospel, and prized them far beyond any mere accessories of rhetoric or eloquence. A strong sense of religious obligation must have influenced him quite early in life. His parents were Scotch Covenanters, who did not regard the Episcopal Church with much favor. Irving became interested in the services at Trinity Church, New York, and attended there, whenever

INTERIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, TARRYTOWN

he could find opportunity, without his father's knowledge. When a confirmation was announced, we read in his Biography, that he stealthily left his home, when quite young, and was confirmed by the Bishop in old Trinity Church. We may detect in this method of his to receive confirmation something of that vein of humor blended with firmness in doing what he felt to be right which so strongly marked his character as a man. He first became a regular communicant in Christ Church, Tarrytown, after the building of Sunnyside, and he always continued a most devout and exemplary member of the parish. On one occasion he said that when he first attended church he felt but little interest in the service, and waited rather impatiently till it was over, and then settled himself down to listen to the sermon. But one Sunday, he said, as he was entering the church, the solemn exhortation to confession was being read, and the thought struck him that he too had sins to confess, and so he fell upon his knees and joined in solemn and humble confession of sins. "And," said he, in that emphatic way which always carried with it the conviction of his sincerity, and with an earnest gesticulation of his arm which some of you will remember, "from that day forward, the church service has ever been to me an increasing comfort and delight." And who will say that the Bible and the Prayer-Book of that fair maiden who was Washington Irving's early and only love,—she who "died in the beauty of her youth, and so in his memory was ever young and beautiful,"—who will say that those treasured volumes, which from the first hour of agony at

his irreparable loss were ever by him, taken with him in all his travels, and at his death still lay by his side, were not, from their sweetly sad associations, as well as from their spiritual counsel and comfort, the means of hallowing that gifted heart with high and holy purposes of love and duty to God and man, and with the blessed hope of everlasting life, in which he lived and died?

Passing on from these recollections, let me touch upon some points of his character which are more generally recognized. Sunnyside and Christ Church were both built in the same year, 1836. That sweet ivy-crowned home of Irving, nestling amid the trees on the banks of the Hudson, is familiar to all. The ivy upon the church tower was planted by his hand, taken from the vine which now mantles in rich luxuriance the walls of Sunnyside, and which was originally brought from the ruins of Melrose Abbey. Within the church there still remains his pew, in which many pilgrims to this shrine of Irving's religious life love for a moment to sit. The pew is marked with his name, and was set apart years ago by the vestry for the use of any members of the Irving family who might worship with us, if but for an hour. As near the pew as it could be placed is a beautiful mural tablet, erected by the vestry to his memory. It is skilfully and delicately wrought, and is in itself a poem in stone. In the centre is the Irving coat of arms, two royal supporters holding a shield, emblazoned with holly leaves, having as a crest a hand holding a bunch of holly. The tradition is that when Robert Bruce of Scotland was a fugitive from King Edward, on being

pursued by his troops, he, with a few friends, among whom was William Irvin—the first Irving of whom we have any record—took refuge in a copse of holly and escaped detection. On coming out, Bruce plucked off the topmost branch of the holly, and adopted it as his own crest, with the motto, *Sub sole, sub umbra, virens*—"Thriving in sun or shade,"—in prosperity or adversity. Ever since then the Scots have a saying that the upper branch of the holly never withers. When Bruce won his throne, he knighted Sir William de Irvin, his faithful friend in adversity, gave him the Castle of Drum, in Aberdeenshire, now the oldest inhabited castle in Scotland, and still in possession of a distant branch of the family, and at the same time gave him this, his own coat of arms, in memory of his perilous escape. In this tablet the holly leaves and berries are beautifully interwoven in Caen stone as the capitals of its marble columns. The holly now becomes not only the sign of the deliverance of Irving's ancestor and his king, but also the emblem of Christmas joy into which Irving so heartily entered. On the stone is the following inscription:

Washington Irving

BORN IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, APRIL 3D, 1783.

FOR MANY YEARS A COMMUNICANT AND WARDEN OF THIS CHURCH,

AND

REPEATEDLY ONE OF ITS DELEGATES TO THE CONVENTION

OF THE DIOCESE.

LOVED, HONORED, REVERED.

He fell asleep in Jesus,

NOVEMBER 28TH, 1859.

Irving was elected Warden of Christ Church after his return from his mission as U. S. Minister to Spain. This office of Warden he held until his death. The vestry of Christ Church had among its members for many years, Rev. Dr. Creighton, Washington Irving, Gen. James Watson Webb, and other men of marked intelligence, and we may imagine the wit and wisdom which sparkled at their meetings. Genius, courtesy, racy, genuine humor, blended with the highest considerations of duty, will rarely so meet again on common ground. It became Irving's duty, as one of the wardens, to gather the offerings of the congregation, or, in parlance, to "take up the collection," and he claimed no right of exemption from what might be supposed to constitute a very unattractive performance. One Sunday, on coming out of church, he said, his eyes twinkling with humor: "I have passed that plate so often up and down the aisle, that I begin to feel like a highwayman. I feel as if I could stop a man on the road, and say, 'Your money, or your life.'"

At a vestry-meeting he once modestly remarked that he had now taken up the collection in church for a very long time, and he ventured to ask if some one of his juniors in the vestry would not relieve him of this duty. One of the vestry sprang to his feet at once, and said: "Mr. Chairman, I protest against any such step on the part of Mr. Irving;—it will create great confusion; the service will be neglected, and the sermon unheeded. When I bring my friends with me to church, the first question I am asked is, 'Which is Mr. Irving?' and all I

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have to say is: 'Mr. Irving is the gentleman who will, by and by, pass the plate in the north aisle;' but if he gives up this duty, I shall have to rise up in my pew, and thus point him out to my friends," [here, suiting the action to the word,] "There he is! there he is!" Irving, who greatly enjoyed a joke, even at his own expense, laughed heartily, said no more about declining, and "passed the plate" until within a fortnight of his death. at one of the vestry-meetings, Mr. Holmes was accompanied by an inoffensive pet dog, who took refuge at his feet. Some question of more serious moment than usual had arisen, which led to animated discussion. Mr. Holmes, in his earnest and emphatic matter, pressed his views upon the vestry, and the discussion threatened to be prolonged and serious. When he had ended, Mr. Irving arose, and inquired of the Chairman whether Mr. Holmes should be allowed to put them all in bodily terror; for he had not only come here to advocate his measure, but had brought with him a fierce beast, to overawe the vestry and control their votes: "And," he added, pointing to the little dog, "there he is now, by his side, keeping guard." The irresistible drollery of his speech and manner allayed at once the heat of the debate, and diffused a feeling of perfect good nature over the meeting, which gave a satisfactory settlement to the question.

Mr. Holmes was at one time complaining to Irving that some boys had broken the church windows, and that severe measures must be taken to stop them. "Now, Holmes," says Irving, "you are the senior Warden, and

if any of the boys are to be punished for breaking the church windows, you are the one to do it, and not I." He would always be on good terms with the boys, and doubtless recalled his own boyish pranks. Think of the innate love of fun which prompted him, when a boy on a visit to Gen. Paulding's house in this village, to rise at midnight, go up to the old Dutch Church, and there energetically ring the church bell, to the alarm of all the ghost-fearing burghers round the country, and you have the germ of that mirth-provoking spirit, which diffused cheerfulness and good humor all around him, and made him the sunshine of the circle in which he moved.

In his conversation, as in his writings, there was no affectation, no parade of learning, no dazzling brilliancy, but every thing was natural, simple, unaffected, often mirthful, but never coarse—never vulgar, never rude. We all know how difficult it is to wield the shafts of wit and humor without inflicting pain upon others. But I never heard an unkind or bitter word fall from Irving's lips, nor do I believe that any one ever winced at his keen, yet inoffensive humor. He was slow and hesitating in conversation, and the first impression on hearing him talk might be one of disappointment; but you soon felt its irresistible fascination. He would often hesitate for a word, but when he found it, you saw at once that it was just the word needed to make the thought perfect. He told me that he wrote his MSS. in the same hesitating way as it were, that is, with continual corrections; and even after the proof-sheets were sent to him to read over, he would still alter and interline, to the confusion, no

doubt, of the printer, but to the clearer perception of his thought. Yet how simple is the style of Irving! It is elaborated, painstaking simplicity. "Now," said he to me, as he had sent off the last sheet of his final work, the Biography of Washington—a work which had engaged his thoughts and pen for years—"*Now* I feel as if I were just ready to sit down, and *begin to write* the Life of Washington."

At a dinner party, I was one of a little crowd gathered round him, to whom he told the following story, which I will give in his own words: "Shortly after the 'Sketch-Book' was published in England, when I began to be known, I entered a store in London to make some purchases. Wishing them sent to my rooms, the shopkeeper asked me my name. 'Mr. Irving,' I replied. 'Ah!' said the tradesman, 'you bear the name of a great man, sir.' 'Thank you,' I answered, with a look of becoming modesty, 'my friends are too considerate of me.' 'A great man,' said the other—'great preacher! great preacher!' I then found that he was referring to the Scotch preacher, Rev. Edward Irving, who was then beginning to make a great stir in London, and I escaped from the store with the rising conceit taken all out of me." Shortly after hearing this story, I came across an incident in the Life of Thomas Campbell, which was so exact a counterpart to Irving's, that I took it to Sunnyside, and read it to him. The poet had been greeted under like circumstances with Irving, as the great Mr. Campbell, and his writings held in the highest esteem by the worthy shopkeepers. Flattered by the undoubted

sincerity of their admiration, he talked with them for a while, and very willingly gave a guinea subscription to some benevolent society of which the wife was treasurer. But when he was asked whether he thought he would ever make Christians of those horrible cannibals, he found to his dismay that he had been mistaken for a missionary to Africa, bearing the same name, and he left in haste, minus a guinea, and a head shorter than he entered. Irving was intimate with Campbell, and was much amused with the story, which he had not heard before, and which gave an experience so like his own,—only Irving's vanity did not cost him a guinea.

Let me here add an incident of his political career which he himself told me;—it is not mentioned in his Biography, I suppose because it was not desired to give it publicity as the one to whom it chiefly relates was living.

Washington Irving was appointed Minister to Spain by President Tyler, in 1842. The appointment was undoubtedly prompted by the desire to honor our distinguished friend. Yet he brought eminent qualities to the discharge of his official duties. A prior residence in Spain had made him familiar with the language and the habits of the people, and his literary reputation and personal character gained for him at once the confidence and esteem of the Court. He had also had some diplomatic experience as Secretary of the American Legation, at London. And when he went as Minister to Spain, he industriously made himself familiar with the requirements of his mission. It was during his official career, when that astute politician, James Buchanan, was Secretary of

State, that the attitude of our Government toward Mexico threatened to involve us in serious complications with Spain. The Madrid Government was alarmed, and continually plied Mr. Irving as to the intentions of our Government. "I wrote to Secretary Buchanan," said Irving, "a full account of the state of feeling, but received no answer. I wrote again, and again, but the Secretary of State did not even deign a reply. I stood a mortified representative of my country before that proud and sensitive Court; and when I returned home, I had to go on to Washington, hunt up the letters I had written to Mr. Buchanan, and place them myself on record as a part of the history of my misson." You may imagine the effect of such treatment upon a refined, sensitive nature like Irving's.

Six days before the death of Irving, I gave a gentleman a letter of introduction to him. It was the last interview he ever had with a stranger. My friend wrote to me that Irving was exceedingly kind and cordial in his reception of him, as he uniformly was to visitors properly accredited. Among other things, he writes: "I happened to mention the name of his old friend, Washington Allston. It set Irving's soul all glowing with tender, affectionate enthusiasm. To hear the great painter so praised by the great writer, with a voice tremulous, partly with infirmity, but more with emotion, was something to keep as surely as if every word had been engraved with a diamond. I did not say a word about his fame, or his books; but I knew that he recognized me as one of his thousands of admirers, quite as surely as if

I had spent the time in high-wrought encomiums upon his writings. Now that he has gone, his kind reception of me will ever be cherished as a benediction."

On this Centennial Anniversary of Washington Irving's birth, we have more to commemorate than his services to literature. Praise him, as we justly may, for his works, he was more remarkable for his personality than his writings. In this town where he lived and died, we want to look upon him in person; we want to evoke from the shadows of the past that form which once walked in our midst, as the man of a kind, warm, tender heart,—a man loyal to every conviction of duty, a faithful friend—in the best sense of the word, a true Christian gentleman; having no enemies, but *all friends*, so that one humorously denounced against him the woe in the Gospel, "because all men spake well of him." Such memories of good and wise men are a people's best heritage; they are the wealth of our land—far more than the gold of California and the silver of Colorado. They are worth treasuring up. In Irving's own beautiful words, which we may apply to him to-night, "there is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn even from the charms of the living." So we, to-night, by an apotheosis of our reverent and loving hearts, place Washington Irving among the number of those in our land who have sanctified the greatness they have achieved by their goodness, who have added the softened lustre of all that is graceful and pure and lovely in life to the valor of the soldier, to the eloquence of the statesman, to the learning of the author. And through the summer of our country's

youth, and the winter of her age, Irving's memory shall be as green and fadeless as the ivy that mantles his own sweet Sunnyside. [Applause].

At the conclusion of the address, which held the close attention of the audience, Miss Sears sang "The Last Chord,"—Miss Proctor's words set to music by Sullivan

Judge Davis then announced an address "by Irving's old-time friend and companion, and *our* friend, Mr. Donald G. Mitchell." Mr. Mitchell then rose and delivered the following address:

MR. DONALD G. MITCHELL'S ADDRESS.

You are met to-night to pay tribute to the memory of a man we all loved—born a hundred years ago.

Yet, we who put voice to your tribute are brought to pause at the very start: Who can say over again—in a way that shall make listeners—the praises of a balmy day in June?

Simply to recall him, however, is—I think—to honor him: for there is no memory of him however shadowy or vagrant which is not grateful to you,—to me and to all the reading world.

It is now wellnigh upon thirty-five years since I first met Mr. Irving: It was in a sunny parlor in one of the houses of that Colonnade Row which stands opposite the Astor Library in Lafayette Place, New York. I can recall vividly the trepidation which I carried to that meeting—so eager to encounter the man whom all honored and admired—so apprehensive lest a chilling dignity

might disturb my ideal. And when that smiling, quiet, well-preserved gentleman (I could hardly believe him sixty-five) left his romp with some of his little kinsfolk, to give me a hearty shake of the hand, and thereafter to run on in lively, humorsome chat—stealing all trepidation out of me, by—I know not what—kindly magnetism of voice and manner, it was as if some one were playing counterfeit—as if the venerated author were yet to appear and displace this beaming, winning personality, with some awful dignity that should put me again into worshipful tremor.

But no: this was indeed Mr. Irving—hard as it was to adjust this gracious presence so full of benignity, with the author who had told the story of the Knickerbockers and of Columbus.

Another puzzle to me was—how this easy-going gentleman, with his winning mildness and quiet deliberation,—as if he never *could*, and never *did*, and never *would* knuckle down to hard task-work,—should have reeled out those hundreds—nay, thousands of pages of graceful, well-ordered, sparkling English.

I could not understand how he did it. I do not think we ever altogether understand how the birds sing and sing; and yet, with feathers quite unruffled, and eyes always a-twinkle.

My next sight of Mr. Irving was hereabout, at his own home. By his kind invitation I had come up to pass a day with him at Sunnyside, and he had promised me a drive through Sleepy Hollow.

What a promise that was! No boy ever went to his

Christmas holidays more joyously, I think, than I, to meet that engagement.

It was along this road, beside which we are assembled to-night, that we drove. He all alert and brisk, with the cool morning breeze blowing down upon us from the Haverstraw heights and across the wide sweep of river.

He called attention to the spot of poor André's capture—not forbearing that little touch of sympathy, which came to firmer yet not disloyal expression, afterward, in his story of Washington. A sweep of his whip-hand told me the trees under which Paulding and the rest chanced to be loitering on that memorable day.

We were whirling along the same road a short way farther northward, when I ventured to query about the memorable night-ride of Ichabod Crane and of the Headless Horseman.

Aye, it was thereabout that tragedy came off too.

"Down this bit of road the old horse 'Gunpowder' came thundering: there away—Brom Bones with his Pumpkin (I tell you this in confidence," he said) "was in waiting; and along here they went clattering neck and neck—Ichabod holding a good seat till Van Ripper's saddle-girths gave way, and then bumping and jouncing from side to side as he clung to mane or neck, [a little pantomime with the whip making it real] and so at last —away yonder—well, where you like, the poor pedagogue went sprawling to the ground—I hope in a soft place." And I think the rollicking humor of it was as much enjoyed by him that autumn morning, and that he felt in his bones just as relishy a smack of it all—as if Katrina

Van Tassel had held her quilting frolic only on the yester-night.

Irving first came to know Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow when a boy of fourteen or fifteen—he passing some holidays in these parts, I think, with his friend Paulding. To those days belong much of that idle sauntering along brook-sides hereabout—with fly-hooks and fish-rods, and memories of Walton, which get such delightful recognition in a certain paper of the " Sketch-Book."

Then, too, he with his companions came to know the old Dutch farmers of the region—whose home interiors found their way afterward into his books.

I think he pointed out also, with a significant twinkle of the eye, which the dullest boy would have understood, some orchards, with which he had early acquaintance; and specially, too, upon some hill-top (which I think I could find now), a farmery, famous for its cider-mill and the good cider made there; he, with the rest, testing it over and over in the old slow way with straws, but provoked once on a time to a fuller test, by turning the hogshead, so they might sip from the open bung; and then (whether out of mischief or mishandling, he did not absolutely declare to me) the big barrel got the better of them, and set off upon a lazy roll down the hill—going faster and faster—they, more and more frightened, and scudding away slant-wise over the fences—the yelling farmer appearing suddenly at the top of the slope, but too broad in the beam for any sharp race, and the hogshead between them plunging, and bounding, and giving out ghostly, guttural explosions of sound, and cider, at every turn.

OLD MILL, SLEEPY HOLLOW

You may judge if Mr. Irving did not put a nice touch to that story!

After this memorable autumn drive amongst the hills, I met with Mr. Irving frequently at his own home; and shall I be thought impertinent and indiscreet if I say that at times—rare times, it is true—I have seen this most amiable gentleman manifest a little of that restive choler which sometimes flamed up in William the Testy, —not long-lived, not deliberate,—but a little human blaze, of impatience at something gone awry in the dressing of a garden border, in the care of some stable-pet—that was all gone with the first blaze, but marked and indicated the sources of that wrathy and pious zest (with which he is not commonly credited) with which he loved to put a contemptuous thrust of his sharper language into the bloat of upstart pride, and of conceit, and of insolent pretension.

The boy-mischief in him—which led him out from his old home in William Street, after hours, over the shed-roof—lingered in him for a good while, I think, and lent not a little point to some of the keener pictures of the Knickerbocker history; and, if I do not mistake, there was now and then a quiet chuckle, as he told me of the foolish indignation with which some descendants of the old Dutch worthies had seen their ancestors put to a tender broil over the playful blaze of his humor.

Indeed there was a spontaneity and heartiness about that Knickerbocker history, which I think he carried a strong liking for, all his life.

The "Sketch-Book," written years later, and when neces-

sity enforced writing, was done with a great audience in his eye; and he won it, and keeps it bravely. I know there is a disposition to speak of it rather patronizingly and apologetically—as if it were reminiscent—Anglican —conventional—as if he would have done better if he had possessed our modern critical bias—or if he had been born in Boston—or born a philosopher outright: Well, perhaps so—perhaps so! But I love to think and believe that our dear old Mr. Irving was born just where he should have been born, and wrote in a way that it is hardly worth our while to try and mend for him.

I understand that a great many promising young people—without the fear of the critics before their eyes —keep on, persistently reading that old "Sketch-Book," with its "Broken Hearts," and "Wife" twining like a vine, and "Spectre Bridegroom," and all the rest.

And there are old people I know,—one I am sure of,— who never visit St. Paul's Church-yard without wanting to peep over Irving's shoulders into Mr. Newbury's shop, full of dear old toy-books;—who never go to Stratford-upon-Avon but there is a hunt—first of all—for the Red Horse Tavern and the poker which was Irving's sceptre; —never sail on summer afternoons past the wall of the blue Katskills, but there is a longing look-out for the stray cloud-caps, and an eager listening for the rumbling of the balls which thundered in the ears of poor Rip Van Winkle.

What, pray, if the hero of "Bracebridge Hall" be own cousin to Sir Roger de Coverley? Is that a relationship to be discarded? And could any other than the writer

we honor carry on more wisely the record of the cousinship, or with so sure a hand and so deft a touch declare and establish our inheritance in the rural beatitudes of England?

It may be true that as we read some of those earlier books of his we shall come upon some truisms which in these fast-paced times may chafe us,—some rhetorical furbelows or broidery that belong to the wardrobes of the past,—some tears that flow too easily,—but scarce ever a page anywhere but, on a sudden, some shimmer of buoyant humor breaks through all the crevices of a sentence,—a humor not born of rhetoric or measurable by critics' rules,—but coming as the winds come, and playing up and down with a frolicsome, mischievous blaze, that warms, and piques, and delights us.

In the summer of 1852 I chanced to be quartered at the same hotel with him in Saratoga for a fortnight or more. He was then in his seventieth year—but still carrying himself easily up and down upon the corridors, and along the street, and through the grove at the spring.

I recall vividly the tremulous pride with which, in those far-off days, I was permitted to join in many of these walks. He in his dark suit—of such cut and fit as to make one forget utterly its fashion—and remember only the figure of the quiet gentleman, looking hardly middle-aged, with head thrown slightly to one side, and an eye always alert; not a fair young face dashing past us in its drapery of muslin, but his eye drank in all its freshness and beauty with the keen appetite and the grateful admiration of a boy; not a dowager brushed us, bedizened with finery, but he fast-

ened the apparition in my memory with some piquant remark—as the pin of an entomologist fastens a gaudy fly.

Other times there was a playful nudge of the elbow, and a curious, meaning lift of the brow, to call attention to something of droll aspect—perhaps some threatened scrimmage amongst school-boys—may be, only a passing encounter between street dogs—for he had all the quick responsiveness to canine language which belonged to the author of "Rab and his Friends"; and I have known him to stay his walk for five minutes together in a boyish, eager intentness upon those premonitions of a dog encounter—watching the first inquisitive sniff—the reminiscent lift of the head—then the derogatory growl—the growl apprehensive—the renewed sniff—the pauses for reflection, then the milder and discursive growls—as if either dog *could*, if he *would*—until one or the other, thinking more wisely of the matter, should turn tail, and trot quietly away.

I trust I do not seem to vulgarize the occasion in bringing to view these little traits which set before us the man: as I have already said, we cannot honor him more than by recalling him in his full personality.

Over and over in his shrugs, in a twinkle of his eye, in that arching of his brow which was curiously full of meaning, did I see, as I thought, the germ of some new chapter, such as crept into his sketch-books. Did I intimate as much:—"Ah," he would say, "that is game for youngsters; we old fellows are not nimble enough to give chase to sentiment."

He was engaged at that time upon his "Life of Wash-

ington"—going out, as I remember, on one of these Saratoga days, for a careful inspection of the field of Burgoyne's surrender.

I asked after the system of his note-making for history. "Ah," he said, "don't talk to me of system; I never had any; you must go to Bancroft for that: I have, it is true, my little budgets of notes—some tied one way, some another—and which, when I need, I think I come upon in my pigeon-holes by a sort of instinct. That is all there is of it."

There were some two or three beautiful dark-eyed women that summer at Saratoga, who were his special admiration, and of whose charms of feature he loved to discourse eloquently.

Those dark eyes led him back, doubtless, to the glad young days when he had known the beauties of Seville and Cordova. Indeed, there was no episode in his life of which he was more prone to talk, than of that which carried him in his Spanish studies to the delightful regions which lie south of the Gaudalquiver. Granada—the Alhambra—those names made the touchstone of his most gushing and eloquent talk.

Much as he loved and well as he painted the green fields of Warwickshire, and the hedges and the ivy-clad towers and the embowered lanes and the primroses and the hawthorn which set off the stories of "Bracebridge Hall," yet I think he was never stirred by these memories so much as by the sunny valleys which lay in Andalusia, and by the tinkling fountains and rosy walls that caught the sunshine in the palace courts of Granada.

I should say that the crowning literary enthusiasms of his life were those which grouped themselves—first about those early Dutch foregatherings amongst the Van Twillers and the Stuyvesants and the Van Tassels—and next and stronger, those others which grouped about the great Moorish captains of Granada.

In the first—that is to say, his Knickerbocker studies—the historic sense was active but not dominant, and his humor in its first lusty wantonness went careering through the files of the old magnates, like a boy at play; and the memory of the play abode with him, and had its keen awakenings all through his life; there was never a year, I suspect, when the wooden leg of the doughty Peter Stuyvesant did not come clattering spunkily, and bringing its own boisterous welcome, to his pleased recollection.

In the Spanish studies and amongst the Moors the historic sense was more dominant, the humor more in hand, and the magnificent ruins of this wrecked nation—which had brought its trail of light across Southern Europe from the far East—piqued all his sympathies, appealed to all his livelier fancies, and the splendors of court and camp lent a lustre to his pages which he greatly relished.

No English-speaking visitor can go to the Alhambra now, or henceforth ever will go thither, but the name of the author we honor to-night will come to his lip, and will lend, by some subtle magic, the master's silvery utterance to the dash of the fountains, to the soughing of the winds, to the chanting of the birds who sing in the ruinous courts of the Alhambra.

But I keep you too long:—[Cries of "No! no!—go on!"]—and yet I have said no word yet of that quality in him which will, I think, most of all, make Centenary like this follow upon Centenary.

'T is the kindness in him: 't is the simple goodheartedness of the man.

Did he ever wrong a neighbor? Did he ever say an unkind thing of you, or me, or any one? Can you cull me a sneer, that has hate in it, anywhere in his books? Can you tell me of a thrust of either words or silence, which has malignity in it?

Fashions of books may change—do change: a studious realism may put in disorder the quaint dressing of his thought; an elegant philosophy of indifference may pluck out the bowels from his books.

But—the fashion of his heart and of his abiding goodwill toward men will last—will last while the hills last.

And when you* and I, sir, and all of us are beyond the reach of the centennial calls, I think that old Anthony Van Corlear's trumpet will still boom along the banks of the Hudson, heralding a man and a master, who to exquisite graces of speech added purity of life, and to the most buoyant and playful of humors added a love for all mankind.

When the prolonged and enthusiastic applause, which had found constant expression and which was continued for some time, had subsided, Judge Davis most

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* Chief-Justice Davis presided over the assemblage, and brought to his duties a dignity, a sympathy, and a quiet humor which went far to make the occasion memorable.

happily said: "That was a beautiful address—none of you can deny that; it is a *marvel* indeed; and [confidentially] let me just say to you, I don't believe Mr. Mitchell wrote it,—Mr. Irving surely must have written it himself; if he did not, think how he must have enjoyed hearing it!" Judge Davis then announced an address on "Irving's Influence as a Writer," by Mr. Charles Dudley Warner.

MR. CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER'S ADDRESS.

We meet to-day—the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Washington Irving—not so much to celebrate a great event as a great influence. The number of people interested in literature at any one time is small. Out of the millions in the republic who can read, only a few hundred thousand read books of literature; a few thousand copies supply the utmost demand of what is called the reading-public for the best work of literature; the mind must be much awakened when it reaches the point of desire to borrow such a work; it has formed an uncommon intellectual habit when it reaches the desire to buy one, for itself, and not as a piece of conventional house-furniture, or as a holiday gift when invention fails to suggest any thing else. Books are a necessity to few, and do not compete in the minds of most people with the longing for an ornament, a good dinner, or something to "purify the blood." The author, of all craftsmen, is the one whose occupation is regarded by the majority of the world as most nearly superfluous, who is most insecure in

OLD WOLFERT'S ROOST, PRIOR TO ALTERATION

his position, and most open to attack, and who has no legal right in his productions except by grace. The Psalmist understood the disadvantages of the author; he knew what act would put a man in his power, and he never exclaimed: "Oh! that mine enemy would invent a patent medicine."

But however literature may be regarded, it is the most potent and enduring influence—except supernatural influence—in the world. No monument erected by men is so lasting, no event of whatever historic significance is so far-reaching, so perpetual in its power to mould thought, and shape institutions, and form character. It is a silent, controlling, civilizing force in society, permeating the whole mass, far beyond the limit of those who recognize its power. The birth of a boy in the little house on William Street, in New York, a century ago, was not an event promising importance. It was a great age, an age of great events and great men. It was the era of the making of a nation, of an original political development unexampled in history; when we recall the names of Franklin, Washington, the Adamses, Hamilton, Madison, Jefferson, Jay, and their compeers, we name a group of men almost unrivalled in lustre and achievement. In the work of that time and of the years following, which determined the political destiny of America, Irving had little share. In naming the men who had contributed most to make America what it was up to the year 1835, the historian would scarcely have included Washington Irving.

A century has passed since General Washington saw

the last symbol of British authority in these States disappear through the Narrows, and influences have gained a new proportion in our eyes. Something else has gone to the making of the people of the United States what they are besides political wisdom and energy; another force, perhaps scarcely recognized as a force, has been slowly at work—a refining, modifying force, a process which changes mankind, enlarges the rational pleasure of life, gives a new tone and meaning to it, broadens and civilizes. About the year 1822 the elder Dana wrote to Mr. Bryant, urging him to write a longer poem than he had yet attempted: "There are men of talent enough to carry on the common world, but men of genius are not so plenty that any can afford to be idle, neither can any man tell how great the effect of a work of genius is in the course of time. Set about it in good earnest." No doubt Mr. Bryant did noble service with his political pen, but the greater service to his country and to mankind, the service which helped to give us a place in universal literature, was of another sort, and his influence that endures is in those poems which appeal to the heart of mankind. When Irving was creating the vast Knickerbocker legend, I have no doubt that it seemed idle and ephemeral work to the politicians, lawyers, merchants, and builders of new enterprises, in comparison with the important business they had in hand. Their business was important, as to-day's always is, and I would indulge in no comparison to disparage it. But a grain of genius is the mustard seed of the parable. The addition of one original page to literature is of incalculable moment.

The real creations of the mind are indestructible, surviving monuments and even institutions. The creation may be fanciful, whimsical, wholly in the realm of the imagination, of sympathy, of feeling. If it be genuine, it will live on, with an influence almost incomparable. It is simply impossible to calculate the influence of such a writer as Irving upon a people who are familiar with him for half a century. It is all the more effective that it is silent, arouses no opposition, is almost unrecognized. I speak of his influence now in the way of culture, apart from the national historic consciousness he aided us in attaining. I do not know how many Greeks could read Homer; there were probably few who did not think more of themselves because he was a Greek.

It is my pleasure to come here to-day, a little apart from the unrest of our affairs, into the atmosphere of Irving's home, to still our thoughts to that intellectual calmness in which he moved. How free he was from peevishness, from strain, from self-consciousness! What a liking he had for humanity, what a kind word for the lamest, most useless of us all! If it is asked in what consisted his power over the hearts of his readers, it may be answered in the words of Mrs. Browning about Napoleon—"he had the genius to be loved." And did you ever think what an elevating force it is in a nation to have an object that can be loved? Here every thing speaks of Irving. We see this river, these indented shores, these ravines that returning spring decks with flowers for his birthday, these legendary mountains, in the light of his genius. It was Irving and not Hudson who truly dis-

covered this river and gave it to us. The early navigators used to get aground in it. He made it a highway of the imagination. Travellers who never leave their firesides voyage up and down it. In the Indian summer these shores are golden, these hills are purple, the stream flows as in a dream. In all seasons to all the world this region wears these hues of romance that Irving gave it. His spirit abides here. Here is his ivied cottage. Here is his grave. I come, representing, I am sure, many who cannot come, to lay upon it a wreath of sincere affection.

The address was received with constant expressions of approval, and the concluding address was then announced to be delivered by Prof. William C. Wilkinson, D.D., of Tarrytown.

PROF. WM. C. WILKINSON'S ADDRESS.

When the hundredth anniversary of an author's birthday is celebrated with various observances—in spontaneous gatherings such as this, in memorial papers blossoming out profusely everywhere over all the field of periodical literature—it may fairly be presumed that the world has already made up its mind what it thinks of that author, and no longer would listen patiently to be told by any one what it ought to think.

This certainly is by eminence the case as to Washington Irving. It is partly by fortune, and partly by merit, but no author whatever, of any age or country, is more secure of his fame. Washington Irving's fame is at least as sure to stand what it now is, beyond any peradventure

that could lessen it, as is the country itself whose honored and beloved, not less, whose honoring and loving son he was. Nay, Washington Irving's fame is yet surer of its immortality than is the American republic. Nations sometimes die, when the languages they spoke survive. As long as the English language is spoken, Washington Irving will continue to be a famous author.

What are the elements in his literary character that make Washington Irving thus immortal?

I begin with the least exalted when I name his style. Nobody that is qualified to speak at all of style in literature could possibly, after due examination, deny to Washington Irving the mastery of a consummate art of expression. Perhaps the characteristic of his style that strikes first and most strongly is the air of absolute ease that pervades it. For my part, I know of no writer in any language that impresses his reader with a sense more absolute of the absence of effort in production. This certainly in those compositions of his which are the fruit of his most fortunate moods. His command of words and of constructions seems almost magical, miraculous. That is, it would seem so, if you were not beguiled out of thinking of the matter at all, by the very perfection of the result. There is affluence of diction, there is variety of turn to the phrase, there is supreme spontaneous fitness between the idea to be expressed and the language chosen to express the idea—and all this goes on, page after page, with never a break, until you are almost ready to believe that you have lighted upon an author at last to whom composition is as easy and as delightful as it is

for the rivulet to flow down to the sea or for the lark on May mornings to sing out of his full heart,

" In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

I said that in naming style as an element in Irving's literary character, I should name the least exalted of the elements that made him the writer that he was. But in truth, as has been said, the style is of the man. Irving's style was the perfect impress of his genius, and his genius was the reflection of his character. He was at ease within himself. There was no discord in him. He was made up of melody, of harmony. There could be no strain, no hardness, no want of grace, in his expression of himself, for there were none of these things in the man to be expressed. The ease, therefore, of Irving's style is not an external, accidental attribute. It belonged to his style, because it belonged first to the man.

Akin to ease of style in Irving is another quality which I am somewhat at a loss to name properly. I shall call it urbanity. This element of urbanity diffuses itself everywhere over Irving's pages. It makes an atmosphere that covers them and beautifies them. Whether you laugh or cry, or are simply entertained and instructed, no matter, you are still conscious of an indescribable circumfluent charm that enfolds you whenever you read what Irving wrote. There is a matchless spell to win and to master in this exquisite urbanity on the part of an author. It is a flattery to you that you cannot resist, as you cannot escape. It is impersonal and personal, both at once. It respects everybody, but it

also respects you. It is absolutely genuine on the part of Irving. It is not an expedient adopted. If it were, it would be sometimes an expedient forgotten. You would now and then be inadvertently permitted to look behind the mask. But in Irving there was no mask. The urbane smile that you meet is a true smile, not a smirk. It is not a set grimace, but a sweet mobile play of ever-changeful, but ever-urbane expression.

But now, of course, I have been using an inadequate word. The urbanity of Irving's style deserves a better name. Let us go inward and find a better. At heart, Irving's urbanity was less urbanity than benignity.

The benignity that I ascribe to Irving's literary character is not an insipid negative trait. It has a pronounced individual flavor. It is so sure of itself, it feels so fixed in truth, that it can do what it will without fear. It can deal with your foibles and laugh at you. It can make others laugh at you. It can make you laugh at yourself, and you shall not be hurt or feel offended. You shall not lose any part of your self-respect. The reason is, you know that this sweetly-attempered genius, this soul of urbanity, of benignity, at bottom respects you and loves you. You confide in him unreservedly. You consent that he should have you laughing or weeping at his will.

Those two things, mated to each other, each the other's completing half—I mean Irving's humor and his pathos, —are simply two different expressions of the one whole, round, perfect benignity of his nature. His eye twinkles now in pure mirth, and you laugh—melts now in soft

pathos, and you weep. But you have responded in both cases to benignity still—only in two variant moods. You love this writer—you cannot help it, for you feel sure, whoever you are, that he loves you.

So I carry up the writer to the man—his literary characteristics to his personal. As old an author as Aristotle —pagan, too, though he was—told us that the good orator should be a good man. The same thing must be said of the good writer. And Washington Irving was a good man. We do not need to say that he was of an heroic goodness. That we do not know. But he was pure, upright, good.

Blessings on his memory! Those of us at least who live here have done what Choate once passionately said concerning Webster: we have buried him in our hearts. His memory is a benediction, under the unfailing dew of which our hearts are perennially freshened and gladdened. Irving's literary characteristics here are dissolved away from our view. We cannot keep them fixed to look at them. They melt and merge, blended into the lovely image of the man himself, who lived and is buried. Let us be thankful for the dust that makes Tarrytown a Mecca of the mind and of the heart, a goal of pilgrimage, a spot of "haunted holy ground." [Applause].

The benediction was then pronounced by Professor T. Sandford Doolittle, D.D., of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J., and then, the exercises being concluded, the gratified audience—which had paid the closest attention, and welcomed the entire programme

with warm expressions of approval—dispersed, to take with them and forever keep the memory of that soft April evening when, upon the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of his birth, the name of WASHINGTON IRVING was recalled and honored in the little town where he lived and died, which he loved so well, and within whose beautiful cemetery of Sleepy Hollow his remains are fittingly enshrined, to be visited by future generations that will not forget the writer or the man!